IAEA and the US delegates also expressed appreciation for India's offer of providing infrastructure and expertise on a regular basis for conducting international training courses in India under the aegis of the IAEA on issues related to the security of radiological sources and materials as also for locating orphan radio-active sources in countries which are unable to effectively deal with them and which seek assistance from the IAEA. The three sides agreed to continue further discussions on the subject.

Opening of Regional Passport Offices

†2537. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plans to open Regional Passport Offices in newly created States like Chhattisgarh, Uttaranachal and Jharkhand;

(b) if so, by when these are likely to be opened and the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government had decided to open Passport Offices in the capital cities of the newly created States of Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchai and Jharkhand. A Passport Office has been opened in Ranchi in 2003. However, owing to staff constraints, it is not possible to open the other two Passport Offices, at present.

Indo-Candian cooperation

2538. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the India and Canada have agreed to work together with collaboration of some other countries in development of International Tsunami Warning System;

(b) whether the two countries also decided to set up bilateral cooperation in science and technology, environment, trade and investment promotion; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so; the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) In the Joint Statement, issued after discussion between Prime Ministers of India and Canada during the visit of Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Paul Martin on 17-18 Januanry, 2005 to India, the two countries agreed to contribute expertise toward the creation of a tsunami early warning system for the countries of the Indian Ocean, in concert with multilateral efforts.

(b) and (c) The two leaders agreed to direct designated Scientific Advisers on each side to report on advancing S&T arrangements and encourage strategic collaboration in selected areas of science and industrial technologies. The two leaders also agreed to support a CEO Roundtable that would make recommendations for expanding economic ties, conclude an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement and take additional steps contributing to greater investment and trade, including trade missions.

Most Favoured Nation Status to India

2539. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has indicated that it is going to confer the Most Favoured Nation Status to India very soon;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) in what manner it would help India and Pakistan to cement bilateral relations and also to increase the trade between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Trade with Latin America through Chile

2540. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Chile has offered the Indian companies to use Chile as a Spring Board for entering Latin America; and